

## Key Indicators of Progress Toward Postsecondary Reform: Proposed Revisions

*Since the Key Indicators of Progress were approved in 2001, the Council has made adjustments to several individual indicators but has not undertaken a broad review of the project. Over the next several months, the Council staff will begin the process of refining the Key Indicators. A progress report will be presented at the September Council meeting.*

In March 2001, the Council approved 43 indicators designed to measure progress toward postsecondary reform. The indicators are organized around the Council's five questions:

- ?? Are more Kentuckians ready for postsecondary education?
- ?? Are more students enrolling?
- ?? Are more students advancing through the system?
- ?? Are we preparing Kentuckians for life and work?
- ?? Are Kentucky's communities and economies benefiting?

Since inauguration of the project, baseline data and goals have been approved for 28 of the indicators. In March 2002, the Council staff began issuing regular progress reports to the Council and posting updated results on the Key Indicators Website. The Key Indicators have fostered progress toward the Council's reform goals and have focused attention on the Council's public agenda. Several of the Council's reform partners have used the Key Indicators as a model for their own accountability efforts. The Key Indicators also are a focus of national attention, as evidenced by Kentucky's selection as a pilot state for accountability initiatives sponsored by the National Forum on College-Level Learning, the National Governors' Association, and the National Survey of Student Engagement.

Since 2001, the Council has approved changes for several individual indicators but has not undertaken a systematic refinement of the Key Indicators project. Changes approved by the Council include adjusting definitions to expand or clarify the original metrics and establishing revised goals. Among the adjustments:

- ?? In March 2002, at the request of the institutional presidents, the Council expanded its retention definition to include students who transferred to another Kentucky institution for a second year of study.
- ?? After enrollment levels in fall 2001 exceeded initial expectations, the Council approved revised enrollment goals in March 2002.
- ?? At its May 2003 meeting, the Council approved adjustments to the Key Indicators graduation rate to align it with definitions used for federal reporting.

The Council staff has begun the research necessary to proceed with the important work of refining the Key Indicators. The central aims of this process are:

- ?? *Reducing the number of indicators.* Streamlining the list of indicators will allow the Council and its reform partners to concentrate their efforts on those measurements most central to the public agenda. To ensure that important contextual information is not lost, many of the measurements formerly designated as Key Indicators will be reported as "related information."
- ?? *Closer alignment with national accountability initiatives.* Measurements used by *Measuring Up* and similar projects were not available when the Key Indicators were established. Aligning the Key Indicators with national standards is vital to the broad reform goals of reaching the national average in educational attainment and standard of living.

In addition, the Council staff will work to implement the accountability recommendations in the Program Review and Investigation Committee's recent staff report. The refined Key Indicators will be supplemented with more detailed, institution-specific information of particular interest to legislators. The Council staff will develop regular mechanisms to communicate Key Indicator results and supplemental information to legislators and the Legislative Research Commission staff.

Over the next several months, the Council staff will consult with the institutions and other reform partners regarding the selection of Key Indicators, revising metrics, establishing appropriate goals, and fostering communication with the legislature. The staff will present an update on this process to the Council at its September meeting. The staff will submit revised Key Indicators and goals for Council approval at the November meeting.

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